



# State of Wisconsin **GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL**

## **DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

**April 18, 2019 – Teleconference**

*Public Participation via teleconference*

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### **State Trails Council Members present**

Bryan Much, off-highway motorcycle representative (member of *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (WOHMA)*) [STC Chair]

Ken Neitzke, hiking representative (member of the *Ice Age Trail Alliance*) [STC Vice Chair]

John Siegert, off-road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)

Kricket Jewett, equestrian representative (member of *Wisconsin Horse Council*)

Doug Johnson, snowmobiling representative (member of *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC)*) [STC Secretary]

Bob Fasick, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]

Jeff Anderson, *Wisconsin Department of Tourism* [non-voting]

Luana Schneider, 4-wheel drive vehicles representative (member of *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association*)

Bob Fasick, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]

### **Not Present**

Ben Popp, cross-country skiing representative (Executive Director of American Birkebeiner)

Roy Atkinson, bicycle touring/rail trail bicycling/road bicycling

### **Invited speakers**

Caitlin Lill

Sophie Parr

Missy VanLanduyt

### **Others present**

Steve Falter

Alex Bub

Sam Tobias

Hank Wozniel for Randy Harden, ATV/UTV representative (member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association (WATVA)*)

### **WI DNR Staff present**

Kathryn Gehrke

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**10:00 A.M. – Welcome and introductions**



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- Much called the meeting to order. Council members and guests introduced themselves.

### **10:02 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes**

- Agenda repair, none.
- January minutes repair, Luana would like Helen Wagner's name added as her fill in
- Motion to approve January minutes by Doug, Ken second. None oppose.

### **10:03 A.M. – Apps/Vacancies, July 26 Meeting, Travel Claim Turn In**

- New application for water trails, Steve Falter
- Steve explains his experience to the group
  - Interest in universal signage
  - Work with local groups, Capitol Water Trails, and larger networks
  - Conservation work
  - Speak to ideas for funding
  - Talks about historic knowledge of DNR programs and ideas and desire to develop more water trails
- Bryan explains the application process
- Bryan asks if motion to recommend application
- Doug makes recommendation, Ken seconds, all in favor, none opposed.
- Bryan asks all members to think of location for July meeting. Bryan suggests Rome, Ken speaks about North Country attendance, Missy mentions Pattison SP property manager might be good to speak on sustainable trail building

### **10:25 A.M. – Overview of the MacKenzie Center**

- Hayley Parsons educator from MacKenzie Center
- MacKenzie Center started in the 1930 and became the MacKenzie in the 1970 where ½ game farm and ½ Education Center
- 42 different classes, both day and overnight – dorms hold 82 students
- Focus on outdoor skill classes
- 3 educators, 3 wildlife technicians, game staff, and few park staff
- Big programs
  - Maple Program about 3,200 visitors
  - Fall Fest about 2,000 visitors
  - Snowshoe/Candlelight Hikes
  - MOHEE 3,000 visitors
- Logging Museum on property
- Sawmill exhibit on property
- Conservation Museum
- Arboretum with over 100 tree species
- Sugarbush – each spring produces 35-40 gallons
- Prairies with trail system winding through
- 5 different hiking/interpretive trails
  - One accessible trail
  - One trail leads to picnic shelter with running water restrooms
- Study pond



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- Fire Tower – 80ft and can climb up to 40ft, used as educational feature
- Wildlife Exhibit
  - 13 Wisconsin native species
    - All deemed not releasable
  - Free for all visitors
- All trails are just hiking but allow xc skiing for school groups and all can snowshoe
- MacKenzie is only DNR property with overnight lodge and dorm
- Groups come mainly from local area but do get upper Illinois and LaCrosse
- Historically has changed programs it has been managed in, DNR Parks, DNR Wildlife and Federally but has been in DNR Parks for over 3 years

### **10:45 A.M. – DNR Report**

- Before starting more Master Planning updates, a reminder you can find updates by keyword “Master Plan” on [wi.dnr.gov](http://wi.dnr.gov) and subscribe to updates separately by ecological landscape
- Superior Coastal Plain, Northwest Sands and Northwest Lowlands Regional Plans – these three regions located in the northwest part of the state were approved by NRB in February 2019.
- Blue Mound State Park Master Plan - the department held the initial public kickoff meeting on March 12th. The purpose of the meeting was to let the public know the department was initiating the planning process, and to ask for feedback on what issues need to be addressed during the planning process. Over 300 people attended and participated in the small group discussions to identify issues and opportunities for the park. The public comment period closed on March 26, 2019 and the planning team is working on compiling comments received. We are in the early stages of the planning process and the team has not yet proposed any resource or recreation management. (Phil Rynish lead planner)
- Northeast Sands Regional Plan – the department anticipates posting the draft plan for public review and comment in May. We anticipate presenting for NRB approval in summer 2019. (Yoyi Steele lead planner)
- Only minor non-motorized trail changes are proposed in this plan. A new primitive walking trail is proposed on the Pine-Popple Wild Rivers for scenic viewing of Breakwater Falls. An informal network of existing multi-use nonmotorized trails on the Potato Rapids Flowage Unit of Peshtigo River State Forest will be designated; the allowed trail uses will remain the same. A section of this multi-use trail system is proposed to be closed due to impacts to an archaeological site.
- Western Prairie Regional Plan – the department initiated public involvement and the planning process in November 2018. The department’s planning team is considering resource and recreation management alternatives as they develop the draft regional plan. Early recreation considerations for several properties in the region include potential for developing mountain bike trails. However, the plan is still being written. The department anticipates presenting the draft plan for public review and comment in the summer 2019 and presenting for NRB approval yet in 2019. (Beth Kienbaum and Savannah Ernzen)



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- Southwest Savanna Regional Plan - the department is in the pre-planning phase of this regional plan. We anticipate engaging the public in May 2019. (Savannah Ernzen lead planner)
- Several parcels for IAT and a potential continuation of Wolf River State Trail are in the works for potential acquisition
- Continue to work with Buffalo County on a biking trail connection into MN at Winona. This trail will eventually extend the Great River State Trail northward. The project plans are completed, and the real estate acquisition is near final. Project is expected to go out for bids in May with construction expected to begin summer 2019. Missy explains further the delays in the project, from funding to species management.
- Continuing to look at repairing rail-trail bridges that are in need. Most trails have emerging problems with aging bridges which require re-decking and re-finishing bridges.
- Projects to repair flood damages on several trails in Douglas Co and trails in southwestern WI.
- All damaged trails are being repaired or they have a repair plan which will be accomplished over the next 18-24 months
- In the process of updating Hillsboro Trail MOU with the city of Hillsboro, Juneau County and Vernon County.
- Holding annual partnership meetings in northwest and northeast areas with county cooperators in April and May.
- Deadline for RTP grant applications is May 1. Expecting to get our average of about 105 RTP grant applications. Cap this year is \$45,000.
- Electric Scooters: Bill has been introduced (as I emailed)
- Electric Bikes and State Park Plates bills are being circulated for sponsorship
- State Parks System is holding a large event on Mother's Day Weekend involving different recreation groups in the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest
- Trail standards: DNR recently had the opportunity to provide an update to the new administration about the ATV/UTV trail guidance project that was in progress and received initial approvals to move forward with that. Once that project wraps up, DNR will re-seek approval (new admin) for the similar project with the rest of the trail uses. Thanks for providing names. We will be in touch with those folks as soon as we have an idea of timeline.

### **10:57 A.M. – RTP Bryan**

- Generally, with equipment you are reimbursed for the amount of time you use the machine
- Previously we talked that RTP funding would not be used to purchase grooming equipment



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- In searching through history Bobbi couldn't find where the council recommended not using RTP funding on equipment and requested we refresh the record with our recommendation in regard to buying equipment vs rental and paying rate
- Bryan asks if we can reconfirm, on the record, our opinion on the purchase of equipment with the RTP funds
- Doug talks about his snowmobile group and that they currently have 600 trackers, track units, and wouldn't suggest doing any changes to what we currently do
- Group discusses the definition of equipment vs tools
- Bryan asked for a motion that the council recommends equipment not to be funded with RTP funds
- Luanna moved, Doug seconds, all in favor, none opposed.

### **11:06 A.M. – User Group Highlights**

#### Equestrian update:

- Midwest Horse Fair had: 700 horses, 250 demos, 500 vendors
  - Next year theme “all trails lead to...”
  - Asks groups if anyone has ideas for demonstrating how people can safely interact on the trails
  - Will also try to find a funding talk
- Governor Dodge Equestrian Group
  - 600,000 down to 500,000 for total of campground updates and have made 250,000
  - Got approval for 12 sites to be electrified
- Trail School
  - Southern Kettles
  - 14 people attending
  - Starting planning for next year's class
- Approached by someone in the N. Kettles who would like the council to electronically map trails
- Horse group did contact Trail Genius, but it was very expensive

#### Mountain Biking:

- Group in Lacrosse called Outdoor Recreation Alliance won \$15,000 grant from IMBA to develop plan for mountain bike trails
- Group in Milwaukee called Metro Mountain Bikers has been expanding relations in nearby counties and just purchased grooming equipment fat bike trails

#### Hiking:

- Winter has been hard for hikers
- Photos from North Country Trails and they still have snow
- IAT and NCT big news is that LAWCON has been renewed by congress and that provides a lot of money for both trails to purchase lands
- National Trails Parody Act was put back in front of congress which would lead for more funding and opportunities for Ice Age and North Country Trails



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### Jeff (Tourism):

- New Secretary proposed Office of Outdoor Recreation to promote and coordinate outdoor recreation
- National Study by Headwaters Economics to compare recreation-based vs non-recreation based
- National Travel and Tourism Week is second week in May
- Reviewing 30 joint effort marketing grant applications, to match marketing funds

### Bob (Transportation):

- Look at reviewing signage
- Re-introduce emanate domain is being proposed in budget
- Was asked before Scooter Bill about signage, and did notice scooters are not mentioned on signs
- Discussion on trail signs that are being reviewed

Discussion on how ATV looks like 4WD and signs are confusing for 4WD users

### Motorcycles:

- Dual sport GPS routes are very popular
- Bryan recently published article on how to develop GPS routes for trips
- Looking at a way to compile all maps throughout US
- Looking to make an obstacle/trials course for motorcycles

### Snowmobile

- Season was long this year
- Snowmobile season officially ends at end of March
- AWSC 50 anniversary last month awarded 9 communities with "snowmobile friendly communities"
- 600 snowmobile clubs in the state of Wisconsin

### ATV/UTV

- Annual ATV/UTV Association workshop was April 12-14
- Trail patrol ambassador training continues
- Planning for regional rides and meetings statewide this summer

### 4WD

- NOVAC came in to try and get both Wisconsin groups to join
- OHV sometimes includes 4WD and sometimes not when looking across the country, which creates an issue

### **12:15 PM – FEMA, Caitlin Lill**

- Two events last year, one 4 million in North West and one in South Central Region
- FEMA money is calculated or allowed by a ratio calculation of your damage amount to your population



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- Department is involved on the permit and regulatory end of FEMA when Counties and Cities are doing FEMA work
- 10 Properties which 4 are State Trails in NW with damage
- 23 Properties in SC with damage
- Discussion on cooperative agreements and filing FEMA claims
- Two paths for filing FEMA; public and private
- FEMA 75% of damage WI Emergency Management 12.5%
- Procedure
  - Work with property mgmt. to record damage
  - Contact WEM and FEMA with early reporting
  - Know if you qualify
  - 60-day clock to reports all points of damage
  - Begin work on projects
  - Turn in project reports to FEMA once projects are complete
  - FEMA site inspectors on projects
  - FEMA reimburses
- FEMA is picky on mitigation, or improving a site better to what it was prior to pre-disaster condition
- With FEMA you have to demonstrate public impact for funding
- Federal entities do not qualify for FEMA
- NW trails most are open
  - 8 miles of Saunders is still closed
  - Gandy Dance has large culvert that needs repair and has potential to close part of trail (Douglas County)
  - Wild River Trail
  - Tiscobia Trail is open
- Central - 400, Elroy and Hillsboro (see map)
  - 400 State Trail is closed almost entirely closed
  - Elroy Sparta is Closed from start of 400 to Norwalk
  - Hillsboro State Trails is closed
  - Lots of washouts, approaches to bridges are washed away, bridges damaged
  - Hoping to open new segments this spring
  - Snowmobiles were put in during the winter, but many aren't safe for cyclists and walkers/runners
- South Central
  - Military Ridge
  - Badger
  - IAT at Northern Unit is open
- Internal to parks
  - Pattison trails are closed
  - Wildcat trails are open
  - White River Fisheries Area is part open
- Capitol Development plans
  - Development of motorized projects at NHAL
  - Maintenance on portals into tunnels on Elroy-Sparta



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- Connecting pedestrian bridge at Copper Falls SP to North Country Trail

### **1:00 P.M. – Trails, Sophie Parr**

- Currently partnering with user groups to help with planning and mapping
- North Eastern Master Plan identified development of equestrian trails in Newport
- Worked with horse group to have them do preliminary mapping of the park of where equestrian trails could be developed
- DNR then incorporated horse group data into our trail system
- DNR then reviewed, looking at other trails in system, bridges, wetlands
- After, experts in trail design will be brought in to examine the proposed trail and decide where it can be feasible
- Bryan asks if there is some type of instruction on how to get accurate data, how to get data to the DNR, then how to get data back to our users in a readable format
- ArcGis Online has both free and paid versions and we do use ArcGis Online maps for our park maps
- Discussion on GPX maps, which are maps you can download into your GPS device and follow
- Bryan suggests “GPS guided maps” developed by user groups, with guidance of property managers, to be posted to DNR webpage
- Sam Tobias (Fond Du Lac Co) talks about 3-year mapping trails with snowmobile group and the issue with getting junk files
- Talks about how submission guidelines could be the solution to not receiving junk files
- Discussions will happen at DNR and will give update at next meeting

### **1:30 P.M. – Cooperative, Missy VanLanduyt (email coop agreement)**

- Sometimes sought out by county where they'd like to
- We take responsibility for infrastructure and partner does operation and maintenance
- MOU is done with local units of government to outline DNR vs partner responsibilities
- Partners develop trail plans, DNR will review their draft plan and provide suggestions, compliance of the plan is then the responsibility of the partner
- Department does not approve or deny uses or mgmt. techniques, it needs to be compliant with trail plan and NR 44
- Typically meet with partners one time per year
- Department tries not to do tri agreements as it makes it messy
- Bryan mentions trail uses and conflict that comes with changing issues
- John asks what the decision tree is for deciding if the State will manage the trail vs a partner managing it
  - Missy explains that DNR decides depending on staff in the area and funding and that the DNR is always open to partnering
- DNR stance is that they will not displace established uses on trail but partner managing trails do not have to take that stance
- Do the agreements allow for sponsorship?
  - County or partner can reach out for funding by private organization
  - Sponsorship is not technically allowed, but donation recognition is allowed





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- Private organizations cannot have signs on trails
- Agreements are typically 5-10 years, but they do all vary
- County has to go through public meetings and comply with NR44 but not DNR Master Plan for that region

### **1:55 P.M. – Public Comment**

- Alex Bub - 4WD annual conference was last weekend and got both groups to agree to combine into one organization. Think focus of new group should be to post legal riding areas. Other ideas are putting challenge areas next to the start of a route. NOVAC assisted in combining the groups

### **2:00 P.M. – Potential Future Agenda Items**

- Think of where we can be July 26
- Report back on mapping and future recreation group
- Ask Brigit if she can do a callout on what is needed for trail standards
- Continue to include damage report in DNR update
- Update STC website and send out link
- Next meeting update on budget item

### **2:10 P.M. – Adjourn**

- Motion to adjourn, Doug, seconded by Ken, all in favor, no objections.

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## **Appendix – User Group Reports (submitted before meeting by Council Members)**

### **STC User Group Reports –**

#### **ATV/UTV**

The annual workshops and meeting of the Wisconsin ATV UTV Association is/was scheduled to be a 3 day event taking place April 12, 13, and 14 in Stevens Points at the Holiday Inn Conference Center. A day of OHV user group panels and topics that relate to discussing challenges, proactive answers and how to generally improve the recreational sport is always the focus. This is also a time of recognition and celebration of all the wonderful work our volunteers accomplish.

The heavy snowfall amounts in February caused different challenges than our group has faced for many years as it applied to winter ATV riding. Different challenges remain as trail openings are likely delayed as we await the spring thaw to occur and dry our natural resources.

Our trail patrol ambassador training continues into the summer months, with a few locations taking on a new role we classify as Club Coordinators. In this role, our regional coordinators train the club



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coordinators to now take on the role as trail ambassador training, adding a new set of field training components. Work continues to refine the standard operating guidelines and field day testing.

As the main summer riding season approaches, our trail patrol ambassadors look forward to working with our recreation wardens and county rec officers. Our team will be utilizing a couple of our trail side Welcome Centers, portable Ez-Ups that are clearly marked as such. At these settings our trail ambassadors will be offering water, snacks, riding area maps and vehicle / personnel safety equipment courtesy checks. Preliminary testing late last year resulted in great contacts and interactions with riders that had many questions. This is a relaxed setting, perfect to get the answers and educational dialogue flowing.

Our leadership team are also in the planning stages for our regional rides and meetings. While our statewide group meets once each spring in a central location to provide workshops and updates, in the summer we go to a smaller regional setting, where the topics and discussions are more regional based.

Submitted by: Randy Harden

Bicycle touring/rail trail bicycling/road bicycling

Spring is upon us but winter doesn't want to give up just yet! For my update, I will be sharing a number of news articles from throughout the state and even one that stuck out to me as important and relevant from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

I want to call attention to Wisconsin Bike Week taking place on the week of June 2nd. There will be bike related events in cities throughout Wisconsin geared towards people of all ages. For more information, please visit <http://www.bfw.org/events/wisconsin-bike-week/>.

The Wisconsin Bike Summit is taking place this year in Wausau on October 4th and 5th. For more information, please visit <http://www.bfw.org/events/bike-summit/>.

Recreational trails are vital to economic development

Article Link: <http://www.mininggazette.com/news/2019/01/recreational-trails-are-vital-to-economic-development/>

This highlights the importance of maintaining our state and regional trails. I've witnessed this first hand in my travels across Wisconsin and the Midwest. Cities are leveraging trail systems to their advantage to invigorate their local economies. We see this throughout Wisconsin with many of our extensive trail networks. I occasionally receive emails from folks riding the Chippewa River State Trail that enjoy several hundred mile long trips around the state. Admittedly, the emails are not so nice and contain complaints about the trail conditions. I recently heard a nice account of visiting cyclists from Alberta that were making their way across WI via road bike.

Millennials flock to Wisconsin cities that offer more public transportation, bike paths

Article Link: <https://www.channel3000.com/news/millennials-flock-to-wisconsin-cities-that-offer-more-public-transportation-bike-paths/1015854702>



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<https://wispirg.org/news/wip/study-finds-public-transit-walking-and-biking-options-could-help-keep-millennials-wisconsin>

<https://fox11online.com/news/local/millennials-are-shifting-away-from-cars>

A recent survey found that investing in public transit as well as walking and biking infrastructure could help Wisconsin attract and retain young adults. I would add that this is very important in City Planning and Municipal Management in regards to the development of public space. Placemaking, which aligns itself with capitalizing on community assets and potential to promote factors such as health, happiness and well-being are fundamentally important when building a city. One of the very first things I noticed and fell in love with when I arrived in Eau Claire were the trails. I have heard residents mention that they've moved to the Chippewa Valley because of our extensive trail networks. Recreational amenities are important to many young professionals and adults and I would further that all municipalities and the state would be wise to take notice.

'An incredible place to bike': Cross-state cycling event to begin in La Crosse, end in Green Bay  
Article Link:

[https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/an-incredible-place-to-bike-cross-state-cycling-event-to/article\\_9621bdc3-cb37-5144-b897-f2b5fc115572.html](https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/an-incredible-place-to-bike-cross-state-cycling-event-to/article_9621bdc3-cb37-5144-b897-f2b5fc115572.html)

I wanted to draw attention to the Bike Across Wisconsin event that is Scheduled for August 17th and will begin in La Crosse and will end at Lambeau Field. This 225 mile journey will be organized by the Wisconsin Bike Fed.

Submitted by: Roy Atkinson

Four-Wheel Drive

Wisconsin 4 Wheel Drive Association and Wisconsin Off Highway Vehicle Association held their combined convention the weekend of April 12 – 14. On that Friday the two groups had NOHVCC (National Off Highway Vehicle Conservation Council) come in to discuss the development of organizations and the possibility of establishing a means of the two organizations establishing a more unified voice in Wisconsin in regard to the Four Wheel Drive community. It came down to three options: Stay as two organizations OR develop an entity where the two would keep their own identity but there being a coalition of which the two would belong OR merge into one organization. This resulted in comparing the two organizations and establishing the differences in the two and determining if any of these differences could not be overcome in a merger and it was agreed that they all could be overcome. Since IF it is decided to go with a merger, Wisconsin Coalition of Four Wheel Drive (WC4WD) was agreed would be the new name. At this time, all possibilities are on the table waiting for the dust to settle and waiting for more input from the full membership of both groups. Also the challenges of Four Wheel Drive as a recreation both in Wisconsin and nationally were identified and they are significant. The boards of the two organizations are meeting again yet this month to discuss further.. stay tuned. There are other organizations watching these actions very closely.



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This last weekend was a busy one with Road Legal 4WD attending the WATVA convention and sharing information with those in attendance on 4WD activities, etc.

It is the general consensus of the 4WD community that legislation is needed to really effectively go forward.

There are more Private small 4WD parks that are cropping up that can be used on a very restrictive, limited basis.

No further update on any Public 4WD Park.

With spring breaking several groups are out there on private property they have access to cleaning up trails from winter damage and also working on cutting new trails.

I am under the understanding that the inventorying, classifying and mapping of "roads" on State properties has been completed and am hoping with the mapping of "trails" on the agenda this time that this will include how to access the mapping of primitive roads.

Many of the clubs/groups again have spring education and training programs through workshops, clinics, meet and greets, etc. There are also many rides and events planned for the upcoming months which are mostly available to only members with a couple that are actually public. NOHVCC has a GPS webinar seminar coming up that some of the four wheel drive community will be attending which should help them learn how to map out trails/roads that are being used on both public and private lands.

As usual many are planning their vacations around out-of-state travel for their four wheel drive experiences partially due to the fact there is not much offered here in their home state.

Submitted by: Luana Schneider

### Hiking

The last half of this winter has proven to be somewhat challenging for hikers and trail volunteers. First there was the government shutdown that cancelled all trail events for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and the North Country Trail National Scenic Trail. The shutdown also prevented trail volunteers from working on the two national scenic trails. When the shutdown ended, winter came back with a vengeance with heavy snow in the northern half of the state (great for snowshoeing) and rain and lots of ice on the trails in the southern half of the state. Needless to say, the trail volunteers and hikers were back out on the trails in mid-March as soon as the ice melted.

With all of the challenges taking place in Congress, there was actually some good news for the National Scenic Trails. The Land and Water Conservation fund was re-authorized with overwhelming bipartisan support in the House (362-62) and in the Senate (92-8) and was signed into law by President Trump on March 12, 2019. While the President permanently reauthorized the expired Land and Water Conservation Fund, he and Congress did not fully fund it, but this is a huge



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step forward. The LWCF is a critical source of funding for the Ice Age Trail as it has provided over 14 million dollars since 2000 to protect the Ice Age Trail.

More good news for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and the North Country Trail National Scenic Trail, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Representative Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) reintroduced the bipartisan National Scenic Trails Parity Act to provide improved management and access to additional funding for both national scenic trails in Wisconsin. The National Scenic Trails Parity Act will allow the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and the North Country Trail National Scenic Trail to receive the full range of support and recognition provided by the National Park Service for the units of the National Park System. In 2018, the Ice Age Trail was used by 1.25 million people and more than 2,600 volunteers contributed nearly 82,000 hours of work. The North Country Trail logged over 66,000 hours of volunteer work in 2018, valued at \$1.6 million.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance held their annual conference & membership meeting April 11 – 14<sup>th</sup> at the Ho-Chunk Hotel & Convention Center in Baraboo. This was a great opportunity for the IATA and the Ho-Chunk Nation to build a partnership in protecting the Ice Age Trail. Hikes on the Ice Age Trail were scheduled each day of the conference.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance has released a full calendar of events, hikes, trail projects and 6 Mobile Skills Crew projects around the state. The MSC theme for this year is: “Building for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Century!”. [www.iceagetrail.org](http://www.iceagetrail.org)

The North Country Trail Association Annual Celebration will be held May 2-5, 2019 in Bellaire, Michigan with lots of events including hikes, skills workshops and volunteer training. The NCTA also has released a full calendar of events, hikes, and trail projects. <https://northcountrytrail.org/trail/wisconsin/>

Both the Ice Age Trail Alliance and the North Country Trail Association will be sponsoring hike events and trail projects on National Trails Day, June 01, 2019.

National Trails Day is the only nationally coordinated event designed to unite all muscle-powered trail activities with the goal of connecting more people to trails. Every trail beckons adventure and has a story to share with any person willing to discover it. American Hiking Society who is the sponsor of National Trails Day, believes these trail experiences can improve the lives of every American.

Each year, on the first Saturday of June, American Hiking Society and the trails community invite Americans of all ages and abilities to find their own adventure and discover their unique story at one of the thousands of events hosted throughout the country.

By coordinating a wide array of trail activities on a single day, National Trails Day attracts new trail users and helps connect existing trail enthusiasts with local clubs and organizations with the hopes of creating trail advocates and stewards. The task to protect and maintain more than 200,000 miles of trails in the U.S. requires a collaborative effort among trail clubs, organizations, government



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agencies, and most importantly passionate trail advocates and stewards (<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>).

Submitted by: Ken Neitzke

### Off-highway motorcycles

OHM riders are transitioning from riding on frozen waters with special tires to riding summer trails, events, and other less developed paths. Dual sport riding remains extremely popular with a number of organized events scheduled for this season. Dual sport riding involves street legal trail capable motorcycles that ride paths that involve both roads and trails. Some dual sport riding involves GPS guided paths. I recently received an inquiry from someone who wanted assistance with developing a catalog of GPS guided dual sport rides in his region in NW WI for people to enjoy. This has proven to be valuable to riders and communities (tourism) in other areas and has led to the development of an OHM trail because of the popularity of DS riding in an area. I recently shared an article explaining how to develop GPS guided rides. The concepts can apply to other user groups as well. The article can be found online here: <https://advrider.com/scouting-mapping-and-sharing-gps-guided-rides/>. The OHM program is still under construction with the development of the required administrative code that is required to fully implement the law that established the program. An initial version of the code will be reviewed this summer. In the mean time we have projects in the works in Vilas County and at the motorized park in Tigerton. We are working on more projects that could come into being later this year. One may involve a Trials riding course. Trials motorcycling is low speed riding that requires exceptional balance and machine control. Trails riding is popular in Wisconsin and the region and there are a number of competitive events here each season. Here is some footage from an event in Duluth: <https://binged.it/2Un8XZs>. If you put a foot down you lose points. Ladies event: <https://youtu.be/17NVWmev0fQ>.

Submitted by: Bryan Much

### Snowmobile Report

Another successful snowmobile season closed at the end of March. Much of the State didn't have open trails until February but that didn't stop snowmobilers from taking advantage of good snow wherever they could.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Spring Convention of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSC) was held in Green Bay at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center. Activities included the AWSC annual meeting, election of officers, guest speakers, and a Tailgate Party at the conference center. There were also trips to see a vintage snowmobile collection and an open house at Ken's Sports, a local snowmobile dealer.

Ten scholarships ranging from \$300 to \$2,000 were presented to deserving students.

The AWSC formally announced nine Wisconsin Communities as a "Snowmobile Friendly Community" during the Convention. Over 700 Conferees representing all 72 Wisconsin counties



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were on-hand to congratulate the first Awardees of the new Snowmobile Friendly Community (SFC) Program. The winning Communities of Algoma, Eagle River, Hayward, St. Germain, Three Lakes, and Tomahawk, along with three counties: Bayfield, Iron, and Sawyer achieved their Snowmobile Friendly status by submitting a detailed, 21-page application describing how they and their snowmobile clubs advocate for safe and responsible snowmobiling in their areas. All SFC winners are awarded reflective, high-visibility, 24" x 36" highway signs to let all visitors know they are entering a "Snowmobile Friendly Community."

Although created by the AWSC, the SFC Program partnered with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to ensure the statewide SFC Evaluation Panel included a Tourism professional to ensure the Program accurately identified which communities and snowmobile clubs were "best" at welcoming, preserving, and providing snowmobile access, support, and services for snowmobilers. The SFC Award/Designation lasts for four years and communities may reapply for subsequent awards at the end of their term.

The AWSC Spring Convention serves as the final major snowmobile event of the season for the 600+ Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs who create and maintain over 24,000 miles of public snowmobile trail in all 72 Wisconsin counties.

There are 225,627 snowmobiles currently registered in the State. 157,084 Snowmobile Trail Passes were sold through the end of February.

Volunteers from snowmobile clubs across the State are removing the trail signs and closing trails so the farmers and other land owners can get ready for spring.

Submitted by: Doug Johnson

XC ski

Many XC ski venues are putting to bed the 2018-19 ski season...but there is still skiing to be had! Find a little recap from around the state here:

Eau Claire / Chippewa Valley

- Tower Ridge Skills Park

Kickin' Kids, Chippewa Valley Nordic, the Eau Claire Ski Striders and Eau Claire County Parks are teaming up to bring a new element to Tower Ridge Ski Area. We are planning on creating two skills parks near the chalet. One park will be focused on younger, less experienced skiers and the other for those more advanced youth skiers. Cross country ski skills parks contain a series of elements like bumps, jumps, and figure 8's designed to be great fun and to challenge skiers skills on skis. Over the past 5 years they have become popular in Europe and more recently in the US for cross country skiing. This park will not only be fun but enhance our skiers abilities, be unique to the region, and we believe it will attract even more family visits to Tower Ridge.

- Tower Ridge trail lighting - Light the Way– Phase II - Update

The next phase is to upgrade the existing lighting and expand the number of lighted ski trails. The upgraded lighting will be more energy efficient and also result in better lighting. Some lights and



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poles need considerable maintenance. The new lighting will illuminate an additional 1.5 kilometers of trails, including more varied terrain and hills. The additional kilometers of lighted trails are needed to safely accommodate the ever-increasing number of participants in the flourishing youth skiing programs, since skiing after school means skiing after dark. During the 3-week gun deer season, only night skiing is allowed at Tower Ridge.

### Rhineland Area

- The ski area in Rhineland, CAVOC has worked hard to get their trails Homologated through FIS/ US Ski and Snowboard and hosted not only many youth events, but an elite level college event as well. The energy and clubs in the area are growing and helping to improve the infrastructure and trails in the area – allowing many to get out and enjoy winter!

### American Birkebeiner / Hayward Area

- New 4,000 sq/ft Trail Head Building is done at the OO trail head and had over 50,000 visitors this winter
- American Birkebeiner had over 13,500 skiers this year with ages ranging from 2-85 in the week long event!
- The ABSF hosted the Wisconsin Nordic State Championships in February, the largest field ever!
- ABSF had over 2.5KM of artificial snow at the Birkie Trail Head in Cable with over 15,000 users!

### Green Bay Area

- This in from the Green Bay area/Bay Nordic: More volunteer grooming which should make for more timely grooming and more sustainable tracks at Reforestation Camp. Bay Nordic also facilitated longer shelter hours making night skiing more available on our 4.5 LED lit trail. Ongoing trail repair and improvement has been going on this summer. Brown County has limited funds so volunteerism is key to maintaining and improving conditions. Hilly Haven Winter Recreation has had skiing for over 35 years but it is off most peoples radar. With some energy it is reemerging! Smaller venue but fun for all levels! Lakewood trails (68 minutes from GB) continue to be improved. Minimal facilities but phenomenal skiing.

### Milwaukee Area

### Lapham Peak and Southeast Wisconsin

The brightest spot for cross country skiing in Southeast Wisconsin this season was the expansion of the snowmaking trails at the Lapham Peak Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Infrastructure installed during the fall of 2018 allowed for the addition of 0.75 kilometers of manmade snow covered trails, for a total of about 2.4 kilometers of trails covered with a 1- to 2-foot thick layer of dense manmade snow. Skier response to the additional trail coverage was enthusiastic, as the added trails provided a different experience of skiing through the woods, as opposed to the core snowmaking trails, which are in an open area of the park.





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Southeast Wisconsin had another slow start to the cross country skiing season for 2018/19, with fair to poor conditions on local trails until mid-January. There was little snow during a warm December and first half of January. Snow in mid-January and throughout February allowed for grooming of the trails throughout the region and provided a ski season of about five to six weeks. Regional trail systems that groom for cross country skiing include the Southern and Northern Units of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, CLCF Nordic, Waukesha County Parks, and Brown Deer Park in Milwaukee County. These skiing venues were able to provide grooming sporadically during the early parts of the season, and consistently during late January into late February. Local skiers to advantage of this opportunity.

The snowmaking trails at Lapham Peak first opened for skiing on December 8<sup>th</sup>, with the last grooming of the trails on March 14<sup>th</sup>. This equated to a season of more than 13 weeks of quality skiing on groomed trails. New snowguns and an improved mode of operation allowed for the volunteer snowmakers and the DNR to make snow on the core loops in early December, provide about 1.6 kilometers of trails groomed for skate and stride during December and early January. Volunteers logged about 700 hours making and spreading snow, with additional time spent on renovating the trail after four major rain/ice/thaw/freeze events. Car counts provided by DNR were used to develop an estimate of 54,000 skier visits to Lapham Peak during the 2018/19 ski season.

The Peak Nordic Middle School and High School ski teams took advantage of the manmade snow to prepare for the upcoming Wisconsin Ski League season. These organizations, based at Lapham Peak, continue to provide opportunities for winter recreation to a growing number of youth throughout the region. The Peak Nordic Kids program had another successful year with over 80 children on the snowmaking trails for weekly programs. The Lapham Peak Ski Club and Milwaukee Nordic Ski Club used the snowmaking loops for their programs, including lessons open to the public, throughout the season.

The snowmaking loops at Lapham Peak provided the only venue in the region this season for youth and adult cross country ski racing. The seven weekly Wednesday Night races and the Lapham Loppet utilized the snowmaking loops.

A Land Use Agreement (LUA) between the Friends of Lapham Peak and the DNR for construction and operation of the snowmaking system was completed in 2018. The Friends made a donation in October 2018 to the DNR of \$116,000 worth of equipment and infrastructure associated with the snowmaking system.

Fundraising efforts by the Friends that are needed to support the snowmaking system included a greater emphasis on business sponsorships. The snowmaking system is entirely funded by the Friends through donations, sponsorships, and grants, with numerous fundraising activities throughout the year.

### Central Cross-Country Skiing (Regional Governing Body under US Ski & Snowboard)

- Nordic Rocks program continues to expand and provide skis to elementary schools and clubs, now over 35,000 pairs in Wisconsin schools.



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- CXC has partnered with US Ski & Snowboard to livestream all the US SuperTour events and bring them live around the country. Over 100,000 views have tuned in throughout the year to watch the professional level of skiing in the US.
- CXC has undertaken a large capital campaign to build an outdoor center in western Madison....more to come!

### Madison Area

- Madison Area Nordic Ski Club continued with the plans of creating a 1.5km man-made ski loop at Elver Park. The venue hosted the Wisconsin State Sprint Championships, as well as a Junior National Cup qualifier event for the Midwest Division.

### Iola/Stevens Point Area

- Winter was slow to come to central WI, but when it came, it came!! Iola and many trails in south central WI were in great shape as we close the winter. It was a great season of skiing once the snow arrived and many happy users.

Submitted by: Ben Popp

### Equestrians

The 40<sup>th</sup> annual Midwest Horse Fair is now in the books! Almost 700 horses, 500 vendors, and 240 clinic/demos packed into an exiting 3-day weekend! Midwest Horse Fair continues to be the largest 3 day equine event in the United States.

The 2020 theme will be "All Trails lead to Midwest Horse Fair" the Wisconsin Horse Council Trails committee is looking into recommending a lot of topics and speakers for the MWHF coordinators to consider.

The 2019 Trails School was filled with in the first month of being offered. We had planned on funding for 12 people, but WHC will be adding funds to bring the total number of students up to 14. This year we have a great mix of users, and a wide mix of locations coming. One person has heard such great things about the school he is coming up from Alabama to attend!

The School will be held May 8 – 11<sup>th</sup> in the Southern Kettle Moraine at the DJ Mackie Picnic Shelter.

From now until July 31 we have challenged our users with the #trashtag challenge. The group that posts a picture to the WHC Trails Facebook page, with the largest pile of trash picked up earns a free 2020 membership.

The Friends of Gov. Dodge State Park Equestrians continue to work on fund raising to install a new 21 spot campground. Good news came this month when permission was granted for at least 12 of the sites to be electrified. The group has just hit the \$200,000 mark of the required \$500,000 goal. Most of these funds have been raised in the last year and a half.

A board member with the Northern Kettle Moraine Horse Trail Association, contacted me with the following suggestions



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*Wondering if the Council would be interested in making sure all state/county trails are available on map related apps and GPS. I worked with Washington, Fond du Lac and Sheboygan counties to get Kettle Moraine State Forest North horse trail map on GIS system so apps like OnX would have our trails. It's awesome! Very user friendly.*

Trails are just starting to be opened for the season, we will see how well they wintered once riders can back out in the woods!

Submitted by: Cricket Jewett

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